

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-28 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Please add new Claims 29-50 as follows:

1-28. (Cancelled).

29. (New) An image output control apparatus which is connected to a first image output device and a second image output device through a communication medium, and which can control image outputting by said first and second image output devices, the apparatus comprising:

a display control unit adapted to display on a display unit a screen by which a user can input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device;

a memory unit adapted to store the limiting value input by the user;

a reception unit adapted to receive image data to be image-output and information representing the number of output copies; and

an output mode selection unit adapted to select either one of a first image output mode for outputting the received image data by using the first image output device, and a second image output mode for outputting the received image data by using both the first and second image output devices,

wherein said output mode selection unit selects the first image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received by said reception unit does not exceed the limiting value stored in said memory unit, and selects

the second image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received by said reception unit exceeds the limiting value stored in said memory unit.

30. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 29, further comprising:

a selection unit adapted to select the second image output device from among plural image output devices; and

a second memory unit adapted to store priority order information for each of the plural image output devices,

wherein said selection unit selects the second image output device based on the priority order information stored in said second memory unit.

31. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 30, wherein said second memory unit stores plural kinds of priority order information for the respective plural image output devices, and

wherein said selection unit selects the second image output device based on the kind of priority order information designated by the user.

32. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein said display control unit displays on the display unit a screen by which the user can input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device.

33. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein when the second image output mode is selected, the first image output device executes image output of the output copies received by said reception unit until the number of output copies reaches the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device, and the second image output device executes image output of the remaining output copies.

34. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein when the number of output copies received by said reception unit is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device, the second image output mode equally allocates the number of output copies to each of the first image output device and the second image output device.

35. (New) An image output control apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein when the number of output copies received by said reception unit is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device, the second image output mode allocates the number of output copies to each of the first and second image output devices at respectively changed allocation ratios based on the limiting values of the number of output copies of the first and second image output devices.

36. (New) An image output apparatus which can communicate with another image output apparatus through a communication medium, the apparatus comprising:

an operation unit adapted to enable a user to input a limiting value of the number of output copies in said image output apparatus;

a memory unit adapted to store the limiting value input by the user through an operation of said operation unit;

an input unit adapted to input image data to be image-output and information representing the number of output copies; and

an output mode selection unit adapted to select one of a first image output mode for outputting the input image data by using said image output apparatus and a second image output mode for outputting the input image data by using both said image output apparatus and the other image output apparatus,

wherein said output mode selection unit selects the first image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information input by said input unit does not exceed the limiting value stored in said memory unit, and selects the second image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information input by said input unit exceeds the limiting value stored in said memory unit.

37. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 36, further comprising:

a selection unit adapted to select the other image output apparatus from among plural image output apparatuses; and

a second memory unit adapted to store priority order information for each of the plural image output apparatuses,

wherein said selection unit selects the other image output apparatus based on the priority order information stored in said second memory unit.

38. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 37, wherein said second memory unit stores plural kinds of priority order information for the respective plural image output apparatuses, and

wherein said selection unit selects the other image output apparatus based on the kind of priority order information designated by the user.

39. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 36, wherein said operation unit enables the user to input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the other image output apparatus.

40. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 36, wherein when the second image output mode is selected, said image output apparatus executes image output of the output copies input by said input unit until the number of output copies reaches the limiting value of the number of output copies in said image output apparatus, and the other image output apparatus executes image output of the remaining output copies.

41. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 39, wherein when the number of output copies input by said input unit is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in said image output apparatus and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the other image output apparatus, the second image output mode equally allocates the number of output copies to each of said image output apparatus and the other image output apparatus.

42. (New) An image output apparatus according to Claim 39, wherein when the number of output copies input by said input unit is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in said image output apparatus and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the other image output apparatus, the second image output mode allocates the number of output copies to each of said image output apparatus and the other image output apparatus at respectively changed allocation ratios based on the limiting values of the number of output copies of said image output apparatus and the other image output apparatus.

43. (New) An image output control method, which can control image output by a first image output device and a second image output device connected through a communication medium, the method comprising:

a display control step of displaying on a display unit a screen by which a user can input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device;

a storage step of storing the limiting value input by the user in a memory unit;

a reception step of receiving image data to be image-output and information representing the number of output copies; and

an output mode selection step of selecting one of a first image output mode for outputting the received image data by using the first image output device and a second image output mode for outputting the received image data by using both the first and second image output devices,

wherein said output mode selection step is adapted to select the first image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received in said reception step does not exceed the limiting value stored in the memory unit, and to select the second image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received in said reception step exceeds the limiting value stored in the memory unit.

44. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 43, further comprising:

a selection step of selecting the second image output device from among plural image output devices; and

a second storage step of storing priority order information for each of the plural image output devices in the memory unit,

wherein said selection step is adapted to select the second image output device based on the priority order information stored in the memory unit.

45. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 44, wherein said second storage step is adapted to store in the memory unit plural kinds of priority order information for the respective plural image output devices, and

wherein said selection step is adapted to select the second image output device based on the kind of priority order information designated by the user.

46. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 43, wherein said display control step is adapted to display on the display unit a screen by which the user can input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device.

47. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 43, wherein when the second image output mode is selected, the first image output device executes image output of the output copies received in said reception step until the number of output copies reaches the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device, and the second image output device executes image output of the remaining output copies.

48. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 46, wherein when the number of output copies received in said reception step is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device,

the second image output mode equally allocates the number of output copies to each of the first image output device and the second image output device.

49. (New) An image output control method according to Claim 46, wherein when the number of output copies received in said reception step is larger than a sum of the limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device and the limiting value of the number of output copies in the second image output device, the second image output mode allocates the number of output copies to each of the first and second image output devices at respectively changed allocation ratios based on the limiting values of the number of output copies of the first and second image output devices.

50. (New) A storage medium which computer-readably stores a program to execute an image output control method capable of controlling image output by a first image output device and a second image output device connected through a communication medium, said method comprising:

a display control step of displaying on a display unit a screen by which a user can input a limiting value of the number of output copies in the first image output device;

a storage step of storing the limiting value input by the user in a memory unit;

a reception step of receiving image data to be image-output and information representing the number of output copies; and

an output mode selection step of selecting one of a first image output mode for outputting the received image data by using the first image output device and a second image output mode for outputting the received image data by using both the first and second image output devices,

wherein said output mode selection step is adapted to select the first image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received in said reception step does not exceed the limiting value stored in the memory unit, and to select the second image output mode when the number of output copies represented by the information received in said reception step exceeds the limiting value stored in the memory unit.